

Research Paper

Relation Between Parental Stress and Parental self-efficacy in the Parents of Children with Autism

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between parental stress and parental self-efficacy in parents of children with disability and without disability. The study included 50 parents of children with autism and 50 parents of children without disability. Through the purposive sampling, data was obtained from several therapy centres and analysed using t-test and correlation. Results showed significant differences between both groups of parents in terms of parental stress. The study also found a moderately negative correlation between parental stress and parental self-efficacy in parents of children with disability with a 49 percent commonality.

Keywords: *Autism, Disability, Parental Stress, Parenting Sense of Competence, Parental Self-Efficacy*

Autistic disorder is one of five developmental disorders classified as Pervasive Developmental Disorders. Autism is defined by difficulties with social interaction and communication, as well as by abnormal and repetitive behaviour. Individuals with autism have a range of cognitive capacities, ranging from average to above-average intelligence to borderline and mild mental retardation, and some who function at a moderate to profound level of mental retardation. Autism, which is frequently significantly limiting, is diagnosed at birth or within the first two and a half years of life. Many autistic children appear quite normal, but engage in perplexing and unsettling behaviours that are strikingly different from those of ordinarily developing children. They may exhibit little or no interest in others, even their parents, and engage in repetitious activities seemingly for no reason. They have frequently been described as existing "in their own universe." Some individuals with ASD are nonverbal, but not all. Certain autistic individuals may have extraordinary abilities in certain fields, such as music or mathematics.

Parenthood is a demanding undertaking in and of itself, but having a child with special needs can compound the hardship. Parents may experience significant stress in their roles while coping with developmental concerns that result in social, economic/financial difficulties; physical and psychological difficulties; and a low quality of life. The problems

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associated with disabled children's developmental demands create ambiguity, which many parents find unacceptable. Parenting stress is the worry parents experience when they doubt their ability to cope as parents. When their child has a disability, the demands placed on them are enormous. When a child is disabled, parents frequently lack the financial wherewithal to meet their requests (Deater-Deckard, 2004). A high sense of effectiveness benefits human achievement and personal well-being in numerous ways. Confident individuals view difficult jobs as obstacles to overcome rather than dangers to avoid.

Parental self-efficacy is a belief in one's ability to successfully complete parenting tasks, which has been shown to be critical for parenting quality. Additionally, parental self-efficacy is frequently related with a higher level of competence when it comes to parenting activities. Self-efficacy is critical for parents in managing with stress and regulating emotions, as well as intellectual adaption to parenting settings. The diverse demands place a strain on the parents of children with ASDs, who typically practise child rearing differently. Thus, parental self-efficacy is a critical characteristic for efficiently parenting the child, regardless of whether the child has a disability or not (Bhagat, 2015). If a person's perception of competence is high for a talent they value, this contributes to their self-esteem (or low self-esteem if perceived competence for the valued skill is low). Inefficacy judgments in unvalued areas of competence are unlikely to have a major effect on self-concept and self-esteem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Davis and Carter (2008), parents of children with asd typically reported higher levels of parentings stress and higher affective symptoms when compared to the parents of normally developing children and parents of children with other disabilities. According to Al-oran & Al-sagarat (2016), in their reviewed article, every parent experience stress as their children grows and the presence of certain characteristics such as difficult child behavior or a disability, can increase their stress level. Sunayan (2015) studied the stress and quality of life of parents of autistic children. It was found that there is a significant association between child's condition that autism and quality of life of both parents. It was also revealed that there was significant stress in parents of autism in comparison to other disabilities. Shyam et al. (2014) studied 100 mothers of children with different form of disabilities that is mental retardation, mental and physical disability, hearing impairment, physical disability and 25 mothers of children without any kind of disability. Results explained that mother of children with mental and physical disability had more stress in comparison to the mothers of children with other disabilities as well as mothers of children without disability. Frascarolo (2015) studied the parental self-efficacy, self-esteem and co-parenting in both mothers and fathers. It was found from the analysis that maternal sense of efficacy was higher than satisfaction at each measurement point of time. Results also indicated that satisfaction was significantly positive but moderately correlated across time. Similarly, results for efficacy for fathers were found to be positively moderate correlation. Further, paternal sense of efficacy was higher than satisfaction at each time point. Pinto (2016) aimed to evaluate fathers' parenting self-efficacy and the impact of anxiety and depression as well as coparenting support, from the first trimester of pregnancy to six months after childbirth. Results revealed that fathers with higher anxious symptoms showed lower levels of parenting self-efficacy and interaction effects of anxious symptoms and time were also found, suggesting a moderator effect of anxious symptoms on fathers' parenting self-efficacy developmental path from the first trimester of pregnancy to six months postpartum. Fathers with higher anxious symptoms showed a lower increase of parenting self-efficacy from the first trimester of pregnancy to 6 months postpartum.

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Objectives

1. To compare the parental stress of parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability.
2. To compare the parental self efficacy of parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability.
3. To assess the relationship between parental stress and parental self efficacy in the parents of children with autism.
4. To examine the relationship between parental stress and parental self efficacy in the parents of children without disability.

Hypotheses

1. There would be no significant difference in the parental stress of parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability
2. There would be no significant difference in the parental self-efficacy of parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability.
3. There would be no significant relationship between parental stress and parental self efficacy in the parents of children with autism.
4. There would be no significant relationship between parental stress and parental self efficacy in the parents of children without disability.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample had 50 parents of children with autism (Mn= 41.36, S.D.= 8.6) and 50 parents of children without disabilities (Mn= 35.4, S.D. = 4.9). Purposive sampling procedures were utilised to gather samples from various therapy and special needs centres throughout the city of Lucknow (U.P.). All of the parents had children with ranging in age from 2.5 to 15 years.

Tools used

To measure the parental stress, Parental Stress Scale (PSS) was used. It was developed by Berry and Jones, (1995) in which there were 18 items with 5-point Likert type rating scale and to measure the parental self-efficacy, parenting sense of competency firstly developed by Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman in 1978, for the parents of infants and later improvised by Johnston and Mash in 1989 for parents of children up to 17 years. It has 17 items with 6-point Likert type scale.

RESULTS

The present study explored the parental stress as well as parental self-efficacy between the parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability and also finding the correlation between parental stress and parental self-efficacy. For this, 4 null hypotheses were formulated and then data was tested by using t-test and product moment correlation technique. The result tables are as follows:

Table 1: Mean, S.D. of parental stress between parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability

Parents	N	Mean	S.D.	Df	t-value	Sig.
Parents of children with autism	50	46.76	9.19	98	3.73	.00*
Parents of children without disability	50	40.20	8.35			

*Significant at the 0.05 level

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Table: 2. Mean & S.D. of parental self-efficacy between parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability

Parents	N	Mean	S.D.	Df	t-value	Sig.
Parents of children with autism	50	66.56	8.00	98	1.34	.18
Parents of children without disability	50	63.34	14.91			NS

Table:3. Correlation between parental stress and parental self-efficacy in the parents of children with autism

	N	Mean	S.D.	r- value	Sig. value
Parental stress	50	46.76	9.19	-0.70	0.000**
Parental self-efficacy	50	66.56	8.00		

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 4 Correlation between parental stress and parental self-efficacy in the parents of children without disability

	N	Mean	S.D.	r- value	Sig. value
Parental stress	50	40.20	8.35	-0.03	0.01**
Parental self-efficacy	50	63.34	14.91		

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

DISCUSSION

From the Table:1, it can be seen that the t-value is 3.73 which is significant at 0.01 level with the df =98. It indicates that there is a significant difference in mean score of parental stress in the parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the parental stress of parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability is rejected. Further, mean score of parental stress of parents of children with autism is 46.76 which is significantly higher than those of parents of children without disability whose mean score of parental stress is 40.20. It may be said that parents of children with autism found to have significantly under stressed than the parents of children with disability. Similar results were found in the study done by Ciara foody (2013); it may say that parents of asd children reported significantly higher level of stress than the parents of normally developing children. From Table:2, it can be seen that t-value is 1.34 which is not significant. It indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean score of parental self-efficacy in the parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability, thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the parental self-efficacy of parents of children with autism and parents of children without disability is not rejected. The parents of children with autism have higher mean score (M=66.56) in parental self-efficacy than the parents of children without disabilities (M=63.34). On the contrary, a study done by Small (2010) reported that the mothers of children with disabilities had slightly lower parental self-efficacy than the mothers of children without disabilities.

From Table: 3, it can be seen that the correlation coefficient is -0.70 which is significant at the 0.01 level. It indicates that there is a significant correlation between parental stress and parental self-efficacy in the parents of children with autism. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between parental stress and parental self-efficacy in the parents of children with autism is rejected, further, the percentage of commonness between parental stress and parental self-efficacy is 49% which is moderately high. It may be said that parental stress and parental self-efficacy were found to have moderately negative

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relation. Study done by Batool and khurshid (2015) also find significant negative relationship between stress and parents' efficacy among the parents of children with autism. From Table: 4, it can be seen that the correlation coefficient is -0.03 which is significant at the 0.05 level. It indicates that there is a significant correlation between parental stress and parental self-efficacy in the parents of children without disability. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between parental stress and parental self-efficacy in the parents of children without disability is rejected, further, the percentage of commonness between parental stress and parental self-efficacy is 12.25% which is weakly low. It may be said that parental stress and parental self-efficacy were found to have weak negative relation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that parents of children with autism were significantly under stressed than the parents of children with disability and no significant difference were found in the parental self-efficacy between both groups of parents. Parental stress and parental self-efficacy were found to have moderately negative relation in the parents of children with autism and there was weak negative relation in the parents of children without disabilities.

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Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest in reference to both the authors.

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